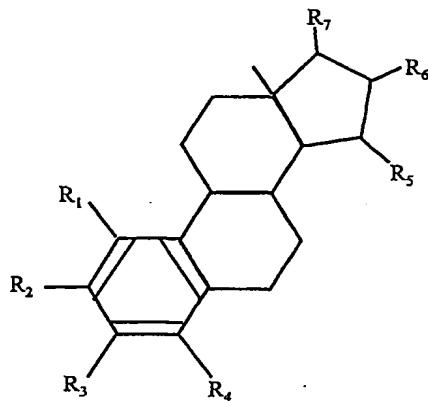


## CLAIMS

1. A cosmetic method of treating human skin by delivering an estrogenic component to said skin, the method comprising applying to the skin a composition containing:
- 5 (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of an estrogenic component selected from the group consisting of: substances represented by the following formula



in which formula R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub> independently are a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group or an alkoxy group with 1-5 carbon atoms; each of R<sub>5</sub>, R<sub>6</sub>, R<sub>7</sub> is a hydroxyl group; no more than 3 of

- 10 R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub> are hydrogen atoms;
- precursors capable of liberating a substance according to the aforementioned formula when used in the present method; and
- mixtures of one or more of the aforementioned substances and/or precursors; and
- (ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

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2. Use according to claim 1, wherein R<sub>3</sub> represents a hydroxyl group or an alkoxy group.
3. Use according to claim 1 or 2, wherein at least 3 of the groups R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub> and R<sub>4</sub> represent hydrogen atoms.
- 20 4. Use according to any one of claims 1-3, wherein the precursors are derivatives of the estrogenic substances wherein the hydrogen atom of at least one of the hydroxyl groups has been substituted by an acyl radical of a hydrocarbon carboxylic, sulfonic acid or sulfamic acid

of 1-25 carbon atoms; tetrahydrofuranyl; tetrahydropyranal; or a straight or branched chain glycosydic residue containing 1-20 glycosidic units per residue.

5. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-4, wherein the composition is

5 applied in an effective amount to enhance proliferation of fibroblasts and/or epidermal skin cells.

6. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-5, wherein the composition is applied in an effective amount to improve skin thickness and/or skin elasticity.

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7. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-6, wherein the composition is applied in an effective amount to improve or prevent the condition of wrinkled, lined, dry, flaky, aged or photodamaged skin.

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8. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-7, wherein the composition contains at least 10  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of the estrogenic component, preferably between 50  $\mu\text{g/g}$  and 50 mg/g of the estrogenic component.

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9. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-8, wherein the composition is applied to facial skin or skin of the neck.

10. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-9, wherein the composition is applied at least once a day during a period of at least 3 days.

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11. The cosmetic method according to any one of claims 1-10, wherein virtually all of the composition that has been applied to the skin, is allowed to penetrate said skin.

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12. Use of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1 in the manufacture of a composition for use in a method of treating or preventing vaginal dryness, wherein the method comprises applying to the vaginal epithelium a composition containing:

- (i) at least 5  $\mu\text{g/g}$  of said estrogenic component; and
- (ii) a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

13. Use of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1 in the manufacture of a composition for use in a method of promoting wound healing, wherein the method comprises applying to the wounded tissue or to tissue in the vicinity of the wound a composition containing:

- 5        (i)     at least 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{g}$  of said estrogenic component; and  
      (ii)    a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

14. Use of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1 in the manufacture of a composition for use in a method of treating or preventing acne, wherein the method comprises applying to the skin that is affected by acne or that is at risk of being affected by acne a composition

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- (i)     at least 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{g}$  of said estrogenic component; and  
      (ii)    a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

15. A skin care composition for topical administration containing:

- 15      (i)     at least 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{g}$  of an estrogenic component as defined in claim 1; and  
      (ii)    a cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

16. The skin care composition according to claim 15, which composition is a lotion, salve or a cream.

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